



Downtown Neighborhood Board No 13 NEWSLETTER



Annual Issue

Spring 2006

c/o Neighborhood Commission Office • 530 South King Street, Room 400 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Layout: Bryan Mick (NCO)

At Last!



Pele Street Park Completed

By: Karl Rhoads

The Downtown Neighborhood Board has a long and proud tradition of fighting to provide green space in our densely populated urban environment. In January 2004, the Board sponsored the dedication of Smith Beretania Park in Chinatown. The Board and the Chinatown community had been fighting to have this much-needed park built for over 20 years.

In February another much-needed park was opened. The battle for Pele Street Park was, thankfully, much shorter than the struggle for Smith Beretania. In the fall of 2001, a group of area residents met in the front yard of a neighbor's house on Pele Street to discuss some of the problems facing the community. One of the most pressing issues was the lack of safe places for keiki to play. Many of the area children were playing in the street at the corner of Pele and Lusitana.

At least one child had already been hit by a car and there had been many close calls. After much discussion, someone suggested that the empty lot at the end of the dead end street that was owned by the State Department of Transportation should be made into a park. The group agreed and shortly thereafter the idea was taken to the Downtown Neighborhood Board.

On January 2, 2003, the Board, on a 9-0 vote, approved the concept. Three months later the City Planning Commission unanimously approved an amendment to the Development Plan Public Facilities Map to allow for the construction of the park.

In June 2002, the City Council voted to approve the park and in three other votes provided funding for the project. In August 2003, the State Board of Land and Natural Resources approved transfer of the land from the State to the City.

When Mayor Mufi Hannemann came to office in January 2005, his administration reviewed the plans for the park. Thanks to the efforts of Council member Rod Tam, the new administration decided that the area keiki really did need a safe place to play and the plans for the park went forward. In October, construction began.

Involvement in the political process can result in positive change in your community. Just ask the residents of Pele Street who lobbied for what the community needed and, through persistence and hard work, got it.

Please Join Us!

The Downtown Neighborhood Board meets the first Thursday of each month at the Pauahi Community Center, 171 N. Pauahi St. (between Maunakea and River Streets) at 7 p.m. We encourage your attendance and welcome your input.

Downtown Neighborhood Board Members

Lynne Matusow..... *Chair*

Tom Smyth..... *Vice Chair*

Karl Rhoads..... *Secretary*

Dolores Fees Mollring..... *Treasurer*

Alvin Au

Richard Brawley

Carlton Middleton

Burton White

Stanford Yuen

Smith/Beretania Park Officially Dedicated

After more than 20 years, the community was finally recognized when Mayor Mufi Hannemann officially dedicated the Smith/Beretania Park and its new play apparatus area at 9 a.m. on October 19, 2005. Following the blessing, Neighborhood Board members, residents, and seven year old Ronald (Ronnie) Sturges joined the mayor for an inspection of the park. Ronnie also gave the Mayor a personal tour of the play equipment.



(The new playground equipment)

Chair's Report

By: Lynne Matusow



■ **E-Bus Route:** The Board, along with the Waikiki and Kakaako Ala Moana Neighborhood Boards, has asked the City to restore the E Bus route as soon as possible. The route was discontinued in June, much to the dismay of those who found it speedy, efficient, and available in the late evening. Board members and residents reported that other routes are very crowded and it often requires a transfer to get to some places that the E Bus went to directly. The E Bus went directly to places residents and visitors want, from Chinatown to Downtown to the Ward Entertainment area to Ala Moana Center to Waikiki and the Zoo, and shaved 33% to 40% off the travel time.

■ **Crosswalk Saved:** Almost single-handedly, board treasurer Dolores Mollring saved the Diamond Head crosswalk across King Street at Bishop Street. The Department of Transportation Services wanted to close the heavily used crosswalk to eliminate the 25 second delay for drivers making left turns from Bishop Street to King Street. After the Board voiced its opposition, Mollring stood on the street corner for six days collecting signatures

from residents and workers opposing the closure. Students from Waldorf High School joined Mollring on the final day she collected signatures. When Mollring, Matusow, and the students presented more than 1,300 signatures to Mayor Mufi Hannemann, he told them that he had heard the public and the crosswalk would not be closed.

■ **Construction Projects:** As we went to press, work began on a waterline replacement project which includes nine months of night work. There will not be any construction Friday and Saturday nights. The project runs along Aloha Tower Drive, around the HECO plant, and 500 feet along Nimitz Highway. The Nimitz Highway construction section will last two months. The project replaces 100-year old water mains, which have broken more than 20 times in recent years. The 24-hour project hotline number is 271-4731.

TEC Environmental Management is working on developing a project to air condition downtown buildings using cold seawater. The cold sea water from a depth of 1,600 feet will be pumped to an onshore facility near the UH Medical School into a heat exchanger to transfer the cold to fresh water that would be piped to air conditioning systems in 65 buildings. The project will save oil that would otherwise have been burned to produce the electricity to run conventional air conditioning systems.

The Queens Medical Center is seeking a height increase for the Queen Emma Tower, reduction in height for the Miller Street parking facility and reductions in open space requirements as an institution founded in the 19th century works to meet 21st century needs. Their request involves an amendment to the Land Use Ordinance and a presentation will be scheduled when the amendment is proposed to the Planning Commission and City Council.

■ **Newsletter Survey Results:** Although most comments received from the survey in last year's newsletter were general, there were specific complaints about loitering and noise created by Clean Team workers in Kamali'i Park, vagrants, and drug activity on Pauahi Street between Maunakea and River Streets. These concerns have been addressed.

Culture & Arts Are Flourishing in Downtown and Chinatown

On the eastern edge of Chinatown, in old town Honolulu lays an eclectic and diverse neighborhood. In a span of 12 blocks, over 20 arts-related businesses/galleries, two theaters, two performance art venues, an alternative movie theater and some of Honolulu's trendiest nightclubs and restaurants coexist in buildings built at the end of the 19th century.

First Friday!

Led by The ARTS at Marks Garage, individuals, businesses and nonprofits in the neighborhood who present art in their establishments launched First Fridays- a Downtown Gallery Walk. The businesses stay open until 9 p.m. and the event draws more than 2,000 participants each month, giving a boost to galleries, restaurants, and other retail establishments in the area. Among the participants are:

The Art Board, 1170 Nuuanu Ave.
The ARTS at Marks Garage, 1159 Nuuanu Ave.
Bethel Street Gallery, 1140 Bethel St.
The Cathedral Gallery, 1184 Bishop St.
Che Pasta Cafe, 1001 Bishop St.
Chinatown Courtyard, 1126 Smith St.
The Contemporary Museum at First
Hawaiian Center, 999 Bishop St.
Da Space, 1192 Smith St., 2nd Floor
Details Gallery, 1142 Bethel St.
The Exhibit Space at 1132 Bishop St.
F/22 Gallery, 22 Pauahi St., #101
Gillian Armour Studio, 125 Merchant St.
at Fort St. Mall
Got Art? 1136 Nuuanu Ave.
Green Door Cafe, corner of Maunakea
and Pauahi Sts.
Hanks Cafe Honolulu, 1038 Nuuanu Ave.
Hawaii State Art Museum (HISAM),
250 S. Hotel St.
INTO, 40 N. Hotel St.
Jeff Chang Pottery, 808 Fort St. Mall
Little Village, 1113 Smith St.
Louis Pohl Gallery, 1111 Nuuanu Ave.
Mercury, 1154 Ft. St. Mall
Next Door, 43 N. Hotel St.
Pacific Traditions Gallery, 19 N. Pauahi St.
Pegge Hopper Gallery, 1164 Nuuanu Ave.
Pipe Dreams Smokeshop, 181 N. King St.
Ramsay Museum, 1128 Smith St.
Red Elephant, 1144 Bethel St.
Sharky's Tattoo, 1038 Nuuanu Ave.

Studio of Roy Venters, 1160 Nuuanu Ave.
Tea at 1024, 1024 Nuuanu Ave.
Thirtyninehotel, 39 Hotel St.
Toshiko Takaazu Ceramics Studio at the
YWCA, 1040 Richards St.

The popularity of this monthly event has led to **Second Saturday**, a daytime event for families.

Chinatown Summit!

Mayor Mufi Hannemann has called a Chinatown summit for April 12 at the Hawaii Theatre. He will talk about City initiatives in the area and other stakeholders, including businesses, non-profits, and cultural institutions, will discuss what is happening and where they are going. The goal is to end up with a call for action.

The Honolulu Culture & Arts District



The Honolulu Culture and Arts District (HCAD) was established as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in 2001 to achieve an aesthetic, social and economic renaissance in the Downtown/Chinatown area by creating an 18-hour district that is a popular center for the arts, entertainment and dining out. The district lies within the Chinatown Special Historic District and the Hawaii Capital Cultural District and is loosely bounded by Fort Street Mall, Smith Street, Nimitz and Beretania.

Ed Korybski, the executive director, says that HCAD fulfills its mission through three areas:

- Promoting the area in conjunction with local businesses and non-profits
- Working with area landlords, businesses, and other constituents to rehabilitate buildings, and
- Developing regular events by creating partnerships and alliances with public and private institutions and individual stakeholders.

The HCAD is the new sponsor of the 6th Annual Nu'uuanu Mardi Gras, a block party held on February 28 between Pauahi and King Streets. Thousands attend this annual event, enjoying the entertainment, costumes, and patronizing area establishments. The HCAD is also promoting Maoli Arts Month in March, with businesses and galleries featuring local Native Hawaiian artists.

(continued)

The HCAD has proposed that façades on Hotel Street, between Nu‘uanu and Smith Streets be renovated by seeking a grant-in-aid from the State.

In an effort to bring more tourists into the area, the HCAD had Bethel Street Gallery Walk Brochures placed in the state information rack at the Harbor and is working with the Hawaii Theatre Center to produce walking tours of the Arts District and Chinatown designed for Norwegian Cruise Lines.

The HCAD plans to nominate Chinatown for a Preserve America Community Neighborhood designation. This is a designation that the National Park Service grants to historic districts.

The HCAD reports its activities at Neighborhood Board meetings.

Mopeds!

By: Dolores Mollring



With gas prices and traffic congestion increasing, people are looking for alternative transportation to commute to work downtown. While they have always been popular with students, mopeds are increasingly becoming a popular choice for downtown workers. They're cheap to buy, you don't need insurance and they are miserly on gas. There is only one problem with commuting by moped -- where to park. Due to a quirk in the law, there is no legal way for most mopeds to park on public property. Mopeds are licensed through the city ordinances that license bicycles. However, in order to park in a designated parking stall on the city street, a vehicle must have both a current weight tax sticker (registration) and a current safety sticker. A moped would have to register as a motorcycle or scooter to obtain these stickers, of which it is neither.

Parked mopeds need to be locked to a stationary object to deter theft. A major source of confusion among police officers, traffic court judges and moped riders is the city ordinance that states that no vehicle may be parked on the sidewalk. So mopeders are stuck in legal limbo, neither vehicle nor bicycle, with no access to public parking. Many park at bicycle stands anyway, and hope that they don't get a ticket. Thankfully, our lawmakers are responding. Bill 68, approved by the City Council and signed into law by Mayor Hannemann, will allow moped parking on the sidewalks under certain conditions. Hopefully this will solve the moped parking dilemma downtown. The Board has asked Mayor Hannemann to expedite the design and distribution of decals which will identify legal places to park mopeds.

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 13
C/O NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION
CITY HALL, 530 SOUTH KING STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HONOLULU, HAWAII
PERMIT NO. 956